

Health and Healing in the Early Modern Iberian World covers much ground with lucid and fascinating essays that are free of jargon. While the book has a comprehensive introduction, it lacks a formal conclusion to pull together all the rich material. Nevertheless, it makes significant contributions to several fields—including the history of medicine, women, and gender as well as feminist, disability, and Iberian studies—and should be of interest to a wide range of students and scholars.

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Poder compartido: Repúblicas urbanas, monarquía y conversación en Castilla del Oro, 1508–1573. By JORGE DÍAZ CEBALLOS. Ambos Mundos. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2020. Maps. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 395 pp. Paper, €32.00.

No matter what interpretation we use of the Spanish conquest (caused by Indigenous demographic collapse, or caused by Indigenous participation/collaboration or civil wars), the alleged outcome makes no sense. It was simply impossible for a handful of Europeans to move across an entire continent to swiftly establish a global absolutist monarchy built on the enslaving of millions of Indigenous peoples for nearly 400 years. This is a fairy tale. Excess force and violence do not empires make: witness the 20-year US adventure in Afghanistan. Jorge Díaz Ceballos comes closer to offering a satisfying account of one of the structural foundations of the resilient, polycentric, multicultural empire that was the Spanish monarchy in the New World.

For Díaz Ceballos, the city, as ideology and political practice, holds the key to understanding the many mysteries of early Spanish conquest and colonization. Cities were not buildings but social relations that justified authority and mobility and defined legitimacy and sovereignty. They were not Spanish either. They were relations that from the very beginning involved Indigenous elites first and later Indigenous commoners. So-called Spanish cities began as alliances (many matrimonial) between Spanish conquistadores and caciques via the patriarchal gifting of elite women.

The original cities were always hybrid, denoting in their names the local supporting *cacicazgo* (including Darién, Acla, Natá, and Panamá, as Díaz Ceballos shows in exploring the origins and development of five cities in Castilla del Oro). Without this support, cities did not survive. Cities emerged usually as a result of conflict among rival parties (Spanish and Indigenous peoples) to secure territorial jurisdictions, moving boundaries of hinterlands against rivals.

Indigenous commoners originally got involved as repartimiento/encomienda labor, thus reinforcing patterns of hinterland nonurban dispersion. Yet soon and paradoxically the discourse of conversion as urban “conversation” made it imperative to create *reducciones*. Indigenous commoners became the main consumers of urban institutions thereafter, which led to the transformation of one original unified hybrid city into two urban republics.

Cities were republican political relations of individuals with each other, outsiders, and rulers. The city was the ideological tool kit of anyone (Spanish, *cimarrón*, or Indigenous)

seeking to negotiate with nearby nonurban (unincorporated Indigenous peoples) or urban communities or with a distant crown. The ultimate sovereign was not the crown but the corporate electoral bond among hierarchies of peers who did not tolerate any autocratic top-down rulings. The category of tyranny was the bottom-up critique of any outside, nonconsensual imposition.

Legitimacy came from the endless negotiation of the deeds that communities deemed as service to the crown and the privileges that a gracious king was expected to give out as rewards. For Díaz Ceballos, newly constituted cities systematically refused to acknowledge crown contracts with *adelantados*. The consensus of peers elected in cabildos could easily overturn crown rules. Independence juntas in 1810 did nothing different than the elected cabildo members of Veracruz had done when in 1519 they decided not to recognize the contract signed by the crown that gave Diego Velázquez control over the colonization of Mexico. Hernando Cortés was neither the first nor the last to mobilize both commoners and Indigenous elites for the creation of cities to gain legitimacy and sovereignty over rivals empowered by the crown. There was no Spanish monarchy without the bottom-up power of cities, and there were no cities without the power of the crown as the source of grace for both individuals and communities.

It would be a grave mistake to confuse this book with yet another study of the role of cities in the early modern Spanish monarchy. This is not the Indies version of Helen Nader's *Liberty in Absolutist Spain: The Habsburg Sale of Towns, 1516–1700* (1990). Díaz Ceballos uses his interpretation of cities as forms of relations and as occupying space in Castilla del Oro (today's Urabá and Panama) to elucidate the bottom-up nature of the Spanish empire in the New World. In the Indies, the ideological cities led to the bicultural empowerment of commoners, first Spanish and later Indigenous. At least in Panama, cities became controlled by commoner-merchants whose claims to privilege were no other than having first offered specific urban trades and services. As *encomiendas* encouraged Indigenous residential dispersal, conversion via the ideology of cities ultimately empowered Indigenous commoners as well. The *república de indios* was nothing but the expansion of the urban ideal to commoners, via the control of newly carved-out commons and cabildo elections. The new social contracts of the Indies allowed for extraordinary levels of social mobility, at least in the sixteenth century. Republicanism allowed for the rapid spread of the Spanish empire all over the Indies.

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A lo largo de la vida universitaria, tenemos oportunidad de comentar libros interesantes y libros importantes; libros fundamentales para su respectivo campo de estudio que llegán